



## Job Posting

Deadline: January 26, 2025

State Appellate Defender Office  
3031 W. Grand Blvd., Ste. 450, Detroit, MI 48202

[www.sado.org](http://www.sado.org)

@sadamich

---

# Appellate Defender

## Job Summary

Michigan's Appellate Defender Commission seeks applicants to serve as the Appellate Defender for the State of Michigan, a position created by Public Act 620 of 1978. The Appellate Defender is responsible for funding, policy, and leadership of a statewide appellate defense system that includes felony criminal appeals, youth appellate defense, and representation of individuals unconstitutionally sentenced to life without parole as children and teenagers. With Commission oversight, the Appellate Defender leads the statewide appellate defense system consisting of public defenders, private assigned counsel, and a training and support program. The Appellate Defender serves as director of the State Appellate Defender Office (SADO), overseeing a \$22 million agency with growing staff in Detroit and Lansing of more than 90 employees and a roster of 125 attorneys, who together represent over 3,000 people each year. The position pays from \$160,379 to \$221,766, depending on experience, and is located in SADO's Detroit office.

## Job Responsibilities

- Develops, advocates for, and manages an annual \$22 million state budget.
- Directs public defender and assigned counsel systems representing individuals appealing convictions.
- Develops and oversees the expansion of representation to youth appellate defense.
- Directs criminal defense training and resource initiatives.
- Directs units representing individuals unconstitutionally sentenced to life without parole as teenagers and children and offering reentry services to individuals returning home from incarceration.
- Directs the administrative activities of the agency, including operations, hiring, salaries, performance, and employee relations issues.
- Defines and inspires organizational culture.
- Manages litigation strategy and workload distribution for the appellate defense system.
- Collaborates with the collective bargaining unit on SADO's goals and objectives, develops labor relations strategies, and represents SADO in bargaining sessions and contract negotiations.
- Collaborates with criminal and youth legal system stakeholders on policies which improve public defense and the legal system.
- Manages a robust and innovative grant program.
- Works closely with the Appellate Defender Commission to achieve both long and short-term goals and objectives, providing leadership and direction.
- Monitors and testifies on substantive matters in the areas of criminal law, criminal procedure, juvenile legal system issues, and corrections.
- Develops short- and long- term planning for the next stages of Public Appellate Defense in Michigan.

## More About Us

SADO team members include attorneys, assigned counsel administrators, investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, reentry specialists, programmers, information technology staff, clerks, and administrative staff. We are growing to over one hundred staff members who form a community advocating for the people we represent. Attorneys and investigators and other defense team members work in trial courts and appellate courts across the state to achieve tangible results and to improve the system. We strive to show the courts that each person we represent is more than a case number and is entitled to equitable treatment and justice. To learn more, visit our website and follow us on social media.

## Qualifications

The Appellate Defender must be a licensed attorney in Michigan, or eligible to waive into the Michigan bar, with at least seven years of experience handling criminal appeals. The ideal candidate must be highly skilled and experienced in organizational leadership, budget and personnel management, public policy advocacy, and communicating with both staff and legal system stakeholders.

## Benefits Provided

State employee benefits are comprehensive and include:

- Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
- 401k plan with up to a 9% employer contribution
- 13 paid holidays
- 3 weeks of paid vacation in year one
- Paid sick time and, for eligible employees, paid parental leave
- Long-term disability insurance
- Flexible work hours
- Paid training opportunities

## To Apply

Please submit a resume, a list of three professional references, and a letter of interest addressing the following by January 26, 2025 to [HR@sado.org](mailto:HR@sado.org) and include "Job ID 2025-01" in the subject line:

1. Describe your criminal defense experience, and knowledge of Michigan's criminal and youth legal systems.
2. Describe your leadership, management, and supervisory experience.
3. Describe your knowledge of Michigan's appropriations process, grant funding opportunities, and current initiatives intended to support and enhance the appellate defense delivery system.
4. Describe your commitment to indigent defense system enhancements and your long-term vision for appellate indigent defense in Michigan.

**SADO is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.** We recognize people of color are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system and actively seek to employ staff with backgrounds representative of the people we represent and the defense community. We strongly encourage people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ people, and people directly affected by the criminal legal system to apply. A felony conviction does not prohibit employment at SADO.

If you have questions about this application or are unable to send application materials electronically, please contact Human Resources at 313-420-2942 for assistance.

[www.SADO.org](http://www.SADO.org) | @SADOmich | @SADOreentry